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THE WHALE'S STORY

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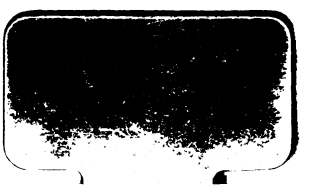

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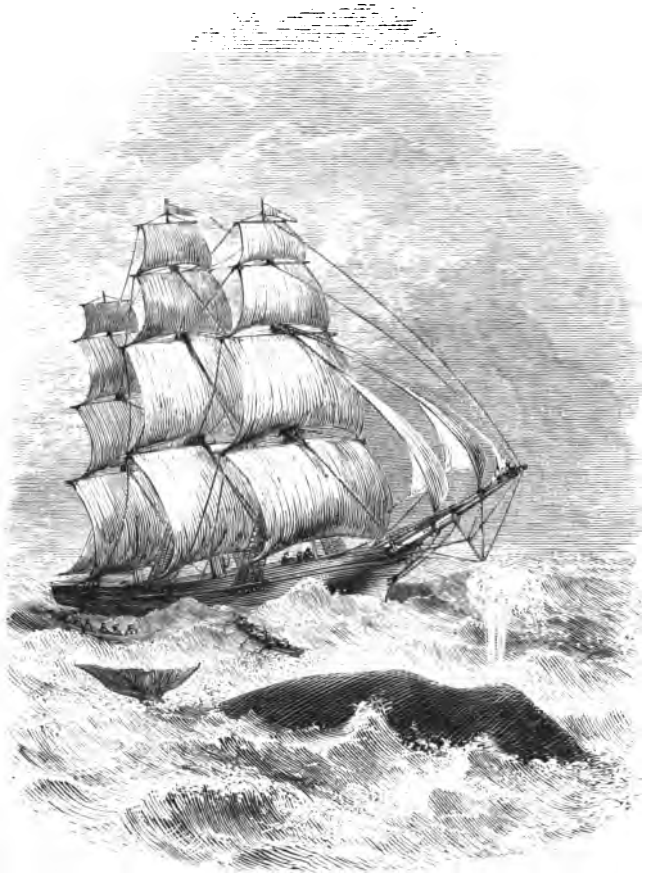

The Greenland Whale, and his pursuers.

THE WHALE'S STORY:

PASSAGES FROM

THE LIFE OF A LEVIATHAN.

Taken

'There go the ships, and there is that Leviathan, whom Thou hast made to take his pastime therein.' (Psa. civ. 26.)

WITH SIX ENGRAVINGS.

SEELEY, JACKSON, & HALLIDAY, FLEET STREET.
LONDON. MDCCCLXVIII.

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THE WHALE'S STORY.

THE WHALE'S STORY.

How the Story came to be told.

PHILIP MELVILLE had returned home for the summer holidays. He was an only son, of about thirteen years of age, and he had two sisters. The eldest was four years older than himself, and lived with their father and mother at home. The other, who was younger than he was, had been placed at a school at Brighton, and her holidays were not to com-

than being one of a formal dinner-party.

So Mr. and Mrs. Melville, and Philip's sister Clara, left about five o'clock, and told him they hoped to return soon after ten. He then went into the paddock, and had a good game of play with the pony, Rollo, who liked nothing better than a romp with Philip. But half-an-hour of this rough work was fatiguing, and when the clock struck six, Philip was quite ready to retire to the summer-house, where he had left his books, and where Mrs. Sandford was about to send him his tea.

He had been in the library just before his father and mother started,

and had looked out two or three volumes. A few days before, they had driven into a neighbouring sea-side town, and there Philip had paid a visit to an exhibition of the skeleton of a whale, which had drifted on shore, and which, after being stripped of the carcase, had been bought for exhibition by a travelling showman. Hence, very naturally, looking round the library, Philip had chosen a narrative of a cruise in the Whaling-seas; and, as an assistance, he had taken a volume of the Natural History, in which the Whale-tribe occupied a principal place.

The tea, the cakes and the strawberries, soon made their appearance,

and Philip found them very agreeable. After some twenty minutes spent in thus refreshing himself, he stretched his limbs on a simple sort of sofa, and took up his books.

He read over the general account of the Whale-tribe, and was much struck by the mention of what one of the naturalists termed, 'the Calling Whale;' a creature that was heard, at times, to emit audible sounds. This reminded him of one of the sights of his last Christmas in town, when his uncle in Bryanston Square took him to see 'the Talking Fish.' Next, he took up the Whaling Adventures, and was much interested in them for more than an hour. But

now it drew towards sunset. He had had a good deal of active exercise that day:—the air was warm and soothing, and by degrees, stretched upon the sofa, he became sleepy, and at last actually slept, and began to dream.

A dream!—what a strange and wonderful thing is that! How often will an hour's dream carry us through a whole life of active work. How strangely will it compress within a brief retrospect, the toils and troubles of years! At other times, how will it combine and arrange in order, the contents of whole volumes which we have read. The laws of sleeping thought have never yet been discovered or unravelled.

Philip's mind was not overcharged with heavy thoughts of past years. He had known little of the troubles of life; and in dreams, the past seldom came up in retrospect. He thought more of the future than of the past; and, just now, the uppermost topic was, the stirring adventures in the whaling seas; the surprising feats, both of the whales, and of their hunters; and, last of all, the curious question, whether, in fact, there was any power in whales to utter articulate sounds.

These were the thoughts which chiefly filled Philip's mind when he dropped off to sleep, and, not unnaturally, he carried on these inquiries

after he had ceased to be capable of waking reflections.

His dream seemed to begin in a whaling adventure. He fancied himself in a boat, with several men eagerly pursuing a whale which had just appeared in the neighbourhood of a Hull whaler; and in chase of which three boats had been despatched. The boat in which Philip found himself was the foremost of the three, and in their eagerness the men had wounded the creature without inflicting any serious injury. The whale, with one blow of his flukes (or tail), had turned the boat over, and thrown them all into the sea. Philip clung to its sides, and presently the boat

righted, and he got into it again. He then saw that his comrades had been picked up by the second and third boats, and that both these boats had 'made fast' to the whale, which then set off at a tremendous rate, dragging his tormentors after him. Philip was now left helpless in the boat, and was scarcely able to direct its course. But he saw, not very far off, a sort of inlet, or small bay, which seemed to promise a safe refuge: so he managed to paddle the boat in that direction, and soon found himself in safe anchorage, where, as it was the summer, he contrived to pass the night.

Awaking in the early morning,

he began to consider what was next to be done. He must get out of this bay, and see if any ship or other thing was in sight. But, paddling or rowing along, he soon,—so ran his dream,—became aware that he was nearing a large whale, which, in this quiet corner, was reposing or feeding, with a great part of his vast bulk out of the water. But Philip had often heard that, when not attacked, whales were generally not dangerous creatures to approach, and as the tide drifted him towards it, he allowed the boat to follow its course till it took him very near to the creature's head.

And now Philip's last waking

thoughts began to produce their natural effects. He had fallen asleep while ruminating on the strange question, whether whales could speak or utter sounds. His dream took this for granted. For the whale, seeing the boat approach, turned toward it, and at once asked, 'Who are you?'

Immediately, in this strange dream, a conversation began, in which, after a while, the creature began to talk of his past life, and to complain of the manner in which human beings treated his race. The various adventures of the whale-chase all came up in their turn; and, during an hour's nap, all the stirring adventures of which Philip had just been reading arranged them-

selves in order, and filled up the story. But the evening and the night drew on,—Mrs. Sandford came into the summer-house to clear away the tea-things, and she told Philip that it was hardly safe to stay there any longer in the evening dew. So he returned to the library, and left the books on the table. But his mind was still full of the whale's history; which came back to him again in fresh dreams in the night. It had so taken hold of his imagination, that he resolved, the next morning, that he would try to write down what, in his dream, the creature had said. So he asked his father for one of the blank books which he knew were

kept on a shelf in the library, and on the day following, finding that he could have two or three hours to himself, he began to write down

'THE WHALE'S STORY.'

Chapter II.

A Whale's Youthful Days.

'Who are you?' the creature had said,—but Philip felt so confused and astonished, that he could scarcely give a rational answer. So the whale went on, 'I suspect that you are one of that set of fellows who were after my brother yesterday. If I were not a good-natured creature, I should end your rambles by a stroke of my tail; but our sort of whales are generally a good-natured and easy-going race.

If we handled you as our cousins the Fin-backs usually do, I suppose you would keep out of our way, as you do out of theirs.' Philip remembered that he had read, that the Rorqual, or Fin-back whale, is so rapid in its movements, and so dangerous when attacked, that the sailors, as a rule, never approach or molest it.

Confess, now, that you were one of the party. I don't mean to hurt you, as I haven't seen you in any mischief; but I am sure that you came out on what your people call a 'whale-fishery.' Fishery, indeed! that is an insult and an injury to begin with. You all know, now, I fancy, well enough, that a whale is

not a fish; any more than a seal or a walrus is a fish, because he lives in the water. No fish ever knew his father or his brother; but we know one another well enough, and love one another, too. I should not recommend you to meddle with one of my brothers, while either I or my sister were near. She'd soon show you that she was no fish; but that she knew her own family just as well as you know yours.

As for your friends, who were trying to murder one of us yesterday, I fancy they are far enough off by this time. They did not succeed with my brother, but they stuck one or two of their irons into the side of

a young friend of mine, and he gave them a run over to the other side of these straits. I hope he knocked their boats to pieces, and served them as they deserved.

I have had a little experience of those 'whale-fishers,' as they call themselves, and have learnt to keep as much as I can out of their way. I was quite a young fellow, when, one morning, as I was playing near my father and mother, one of those boats crept up behind one of my sisters, and stuck a lance, I think they call it, into her ribs. But my father, who was not far off, came up in an instant, and gave a leap right across the boat, smashing it to pieces, and sending the

fellows far enough down into the sea. I believe that two other boats, which were not far off, picked up the rascals when they rose to the surface; but I fancy that one or two of them would never go 'a whale-fishing' again. As for my poor sister, the blow drew out the lance, and she swam off, my father and I following her, glad enough to be out of such bad company.

Excepting two or three scuffles of this kind, my younger days (the whale went on to say) were passed pleasantly enough.

Looking back as far as my memory will carry me, I find myself quite a little chap, keeping very close to my mother's side as she lay among

the mud and rushes of a small bay, many a long mile from this part. It was a pleasant place for a youngster like me, and showed the wisdom of my mother's choice. How well I remember the smooth sandy banks, the blue water, deep enough for a baby-whale to sport in, but not deep enough to puzzle me in my first attempt at the difficult work of breathing! It was then I began to know something of the enjoyment of a whale's existence (of which you understand so wonderfully little), without those tremendous risks and perils (of which you have little less idea). Did you ever dream, you men, how we creatures love each other? or do you

think you have all the affection in the world to yourself; that it is only you tiny men who love their mothers, and only your slight, weakly women who love their young ones? Ah, then, I should like to have shown you my mother! What a fine creature she was! How splendidly she cut the water in her lightning speed! I have never seen flukes such as hers, so graceful and yet powerful in action, never have I seen such a head, such teeth, such fins. But when I first remember her, lying by me in those quiet waters, I knew little of all this; what I delighted in then, was her dear loving eyes. How she used to look at me! When I had been

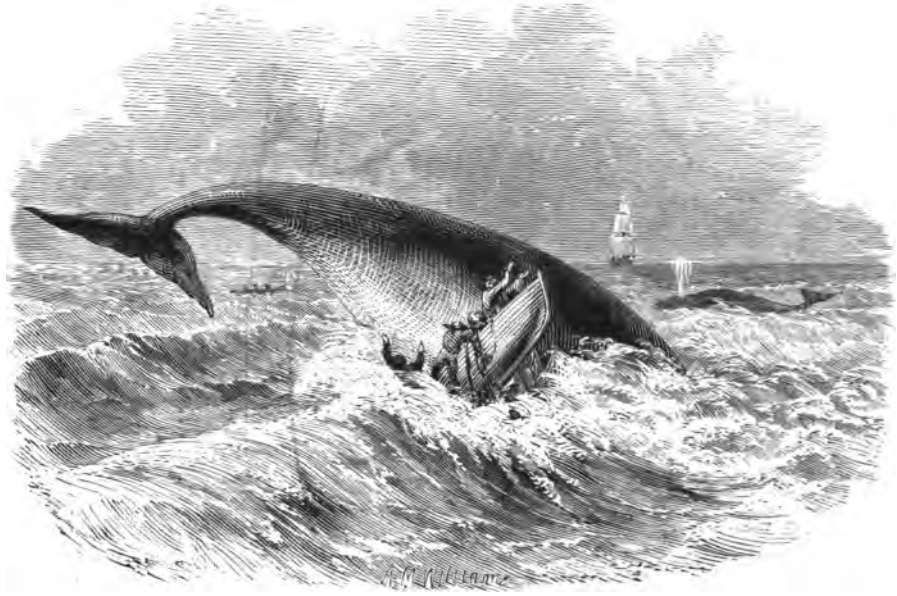
sporting about near her, tearing up the tangled weeds, chasing the little fishes, or splashing the water about with my tail, I always came back to her side to find her deep, full eyes overflowing with love. She used to take wonderful care of me, never letting me out of her sight, but constantly following, when in my fun I had gone farther than usual towards the open sea.

They say, indeed, that she knew more of the dangers of the open sea than most of us. Hers had been an active, and somewhat adventurous life. More than once had she nearly fallen a prey to the barbarous whale-murderers and their horrid harpoons.

Once, when quite young, years before I was born, she was out with a number of others, a 'school' as I believe you call them. They were all enjoying themselves finely in the broad sea, swimming this way and that, and refreshing themselves with the cool, calm water, for the weather was hot, and the sun shone all too brightly on the surface of the sea. My mother had but just come up for a little fresh air, when a cry reached her ears from high up in the air above her. 'There she blows! there she blows!' and before she had been under water again many minutes, she heard a little, regular plashing not far off. Raising her head, and turn-

ing over for a better view, she caught sight of what she had never seen before, a little boat, with creatures much like you in it.

Little knowing in those early days the fearful danger there is to us in the approach of one of those apparently harmless little boats, she lay still watching it, till a sudden, terrible twinge of pain, made her aware that the little toy was not so innocent as it looked. Putting forth all her strength, which was no trifle I can tell you, she fled for her life, hoping thus to escape the horrible iron lodged in her back, utterly unaware that it was fastened to the boat itself, so that she was only dragging her blood-



'Throwing its luckless crew into the sea.'

P. 25.

thirsty enemies in her train. When she found that she was dragging the boat after her, she was ready to die of despair; in vain she turned over and over, lashed the water with her tail, nothing would extricate the tormenting harpoon. Happily for her, friends were at hand. One of the school, enraged at the sight, made for the boat and with two adroit strokes of her flukes completely shivered it, throwing its luckless crew into the sea, and at the same time so striking the rope, that the iron was drawn out of my mother's flesh, and her life saved. This done, the two swam away, rejoicing in their victory, and were soon out of sight of their per-

secutors. The soft, cool water refreshed and healed my mother's wound, but she had learned a lesson which she did not soon forget.

Many a long, pleasant day did I lie watching my mother in a sleepy, dreamy state of happiness. It was not much I needed to make me happy, ignorant as I was of anything like pain or danger. There was plenty to amuse one, too, for it was a very lively part of the sea in which we lived. Multitudes of the lesser creatures were enjoying themselves there all day long, and I could often have laughed, had it been in my nature, at their funny frolics. To see the small fry chasing each other

about, whirling round and round, jumping up and down, making little circles on the water high above my head, it was too ludicrous. And then, if only my mother opened her mouth, the eagerness with which they all rushed in! I used to wonder at my mother's ever having thought of such a good plan; but after a time I tried it myself, and I found that it answered very well. It gives one much less trouble than going fighting and killing, like those greedy old sharks, and I believe those little creatures taste just as good and are more wholesome than the larger food. So I just keep to the old plan; when I want my dinner, I simply let my

lower jaw fall, and lie quietly waiting. And as soon as ever the little things catch sight of my white teeth and glistening mouth, they all come swimming straight in; and when enough have collected, snap goes my jaw, the water is thrown out, and my dinner is safe! Or when close to shore I sometimes treat myself to greater delicacies than the little shrimps. There are abundance of rock-cod near the land, which are pleasant enough to eat, but what I like best are the 'cuttle-fish.' I believe you call the creature 'the sepia,' but you know very little about him, I suspect. You men have good reason to fear him, however, and ought to be very

thankful to me for eating him up. I remember once, when lying close to shore, seeing one of them coming off conqueror from a fight with one of your mates.

You know the creature has eight long arms, which he certainly manages very skilfully. Well, it seems from what I can make out that this man had been trying how he could exist in our element instead of his own; I suppose he would call it bathing. Anyhow, he paid for his folly. The cuttle-fish seems to have caught him by the feet, and held him so firmly that by no kicking could he release himself. Compelled to use his hands, the cunning fish soon had him tight

by them also, and thus pinioned he was dragged away, till I saw him in the clutches of his conqueror, going down to the far depths, certainly never to see dry land again.

Very fine, juicy things those arms of the cuttle-fish are to one's taste, I can tell you, and you don't need so many of these fish as of the shrimps to make a good dinner. Sometimes I have caught a very large one, nearly a quarter as large as myself, which would last me some while and made a capital meal. Wonderful are the battles which these creatures have among themselves, and many a funny story I could tell of their feats of arms. Seamed wounds and maimed

limbs, splendid marks of honourable strife, are not peculiar to you land-folk, much as you brag about them. Just come with me a few miles along the sea-bed and I will show you many a sword-fish with a broken sword; many a lobster or crab wanting a leg or two; many a deformed shark; aye, and here and there a fellow of my own, with a twisted, useless jaw.

Chapter III.

First Trouble.

Before I was old enough to be quite independent of my mother, while I was still happiest near her, there came one day a great change in my life. I remember very well that I had been frisking about a good deal, and had got rather tired, when suddenly I saw my mother preparing to make a move. She had just been up spouting, and had stayed a good while

on the surface, when coming below water she made me a sign with her flukes to follow. I did not feel inclined for a long stroll, but seeing her making off, I soon began to use my fins, fearful, as I well might be, of losing sight of her. We soon turned out of the dear old creek, the place of my birth, and it was long before I saw that pleasant home again. It was a quiet, healthy place, full of excellent food, and abounding in rocks and rock-cod. But it was a new kind of life I was to live now, and one of far greater activity.

Just as we entered the open sea, and as I was straining with fin and fluke to keep pace with my mother,

I suddenly caught sight of my father's head and hump. A few minutes more and I found myself swimming contentedly in the midst of more of my fellow-creatures than as yet I had dreamt of. Never had it entered my stupid young brain that so goodly a number of handsome whales peopled this empire of ours. In the foolish pride of ignorant youth, lording it over sharks and sword-fish and cod and cuttle, I had fancied myself and my father and mother almost the only whales in the world. I can tell you I felt small in such noble company, and soon had to struggle up for a draught of fresh air; the surprise had so taken away my breath.

Lying there on the surface of the calm, unruffled water, I looked along as far as I could see, for a full round moon overhead was lighting up the pasture-ground far and wide; and all along in one wide line I saw the black humps, and here and there the sparkling spouts, or high waving tails of my lordly friends, and proud enough I felt to find myself one of them.

Ah, it was a fine thing to feel drawn along through miles and miles of blue water in the wake of so many companions,—still close to my mother's side, never out of reach of her eye, and yet feeling the motion and stir of so much life! It was a much busier life than that which I had

hitherto led, and I soon found waking up in me feelings which I had never known before. I began to get restless, and to delight in long, swift swimming races with the young whales around me. Often would we chase each other in and out among the older whales, up and down, now on the surface, now far down below; now rushing up against some steady old grandfather; now tumbling over some young mother and baby; till, tired and out of breath, we had to rise and, with a lusty spout or two, prepare for more fun. I found many friends to my liking, and others with whom I never could get on. One of those whom I liked best was a fine

young whale with particularly bright eyes. We two were always together, romping about in fine style. He could swim faster and better than I could, but he was for ever getting into scrapes with his elders. Ah, he was an ill-mannered rascal! Many a side-slap have I seen him get from some old fellow's tail,—one of the greatest disgraces possible, you must know; for we whales never use our tails except in fighting with men; our heads are our weapons in dealing with each other. But little the young scapegrace cared for slaps or disgrace either; away he would go with one careless shake of his giddy flukes, and I after him, threading our way in

and out of the main army, till reaching the outer circle we would distance them all by many a length. One enemy we both had in an ill-natured, cross-grained young one about our own age. This creature was never well, constantly feeding and as constantly being sick; I expect it was his incessant indigestion that made him so ill-tempered. Anyhow, we three could never agree. Let us be where we would we were sure to get in each other's way, sure to attack the same cuttle-fish, or to take the course best liked by the other. Now, I believe my own temper is none of the best; I can remember times in my life when I have been boiling

over with rage, perfectly blind and reckless with passion. So that, truth to tell, the snarling of the wretched creature, whether caused by ill-health or ill-temper, proved at last too much.

It was one day, about the time that the heat and glow on the surface is greatest, that I was lazily swimming with the stream, basking in the sun and floating on the waves which, so warm and quiet, played over my sides. All of a sudden, my pleasure was spoilt by a great bump from underneath, and in another minute there was a great splashing and spluttering, and that troublesome creature was sending the water in all directions with his flukes, paying no attention

whatever to the inconvenience and annoyance he was causing his neighbours. Greatly provoked, I gave him a warning stroke of the forehead, but, instead of in the least giving way, he rushed at me in the most outrageous manner. Seeing that there was nothing for it, but that fight I must, I boldly seized him by the lower jaw, and with a violent wrench tried to teach him better manners. For many minutes we wrestled and struggled, each resolute not to give way, each lashing the water into spray with his tail. At one moment he seemed to be failing,—at the next he was ferocious as ever; but we were both of us but youngsters, and

a kind of swift rushing behind us made us suddenly take flight, loosen our hold, and make off in opposite directions. In this way we neither of us had the honour of a victory, nor was the quarrel in any way settled. Still an unpleasant stiffness about the jaw made us both disposed to let the matter rest there.

That was a memorable day to me, memorable as that on which I first beheld that troublesome little being who I have since discovered to be the greatest enemy to our kind; the destroyer of all social happiness amongst the most innocent of his fellow-creatures,—I mean, man.

I told you that a sudden move-

ment had frightened me from my busy conflict. Well, of course, I took refuge at my mother's side. It seemed as if a kind of shudder had run through our whole school; we had been going along at a considerable rate, when suddenly our leaders stopped, and in some kind of terrible amazement began crowding one upon another in one confused body. Whale pushed against whale, till many had hardly room to move. Still, as my mother and I were far in the centre, the panic scarcely reached us, but in calm unconcern we lay and watched. Well do I remember my dreamy wonder, as looking up through very clear, blue water, I

caught sight of a kind of coloured log, of a queer shape, with little, narrow fins sticking out on both sides, and small round heads just above the edge. For some time I lay looking at it, without much troubling myself to discover whether it were fish or sea-weed, whether it were dead or alive. It is an exertion to think, and I was quite content to lie there in peace without thought or care; but after a time a kind of stir in the little thing excited my curiosity, and I resolved to go and spy. Putting my head close to its side, I began to take in the new idea. It is hard to imagine anything so funny as a man, but there were six of them there, and by de-

grees I contrived to understand them. There is very little resemblance between our heads and yours, indeed one can hardly compare them; perhaps there may be something alike in our eyes, but your mouths are small indeed. And yet you men make a great noise with your mouths, a thing we never do. One of the queer things stretched out the tiniest little white fin and patted my head, but I hardly felt it. What a funny little toy the whole thing seemed, lying there amongst us all! For a long time, it did not attempt to move; indeed, I believe, it could not, being so hemmed in and shut up by us whales. Several of us came round it and looked, but

we met with different kinds of receptions; for while the men only patted my head and talked in their queer way about me, some of my companions, especially the older ones, got unpleasant pricks which sent them diving. The man who did this was raised up in the end of the boat, as if he were standing on his flukes, and he held that horrid pointed iron which I have since learned to know and dread.

A good while passed in this way. Down below the very young whales were amusing themselves as usual, and on the surface we lay undisturbed, while right in the midst of us was that little boat, full of human creatures.

How easy it would have been, even for me, youngster as I was, to have flung the whole concern into the air, or with one slap of my tail, to have sent them all to the bottom! If I had done so, the sharks would have thanked me for a good dinner, and many a luckless whale would have rejoiced in a life prolonged. But unfortunately our notions of propriety, unlike those of man, forbid us to harm those who do not harm us, (save in the matter of necessary food, of course,) so that so long as man lets us alone, we let him alone.

But all this while the outer circle of our company was in great confusion, tumbling and tossing about

in the wildest dismay. And suddenly there rushed into our midst a large, wounded whale. Tearing the water in one wide, white rent, and discolouring it at the same time with her fast-streaming blood, she rushed madly into our ranks. Whales, old and young, had to make way before her, and tumbling one against another, the whole sea seemed in an uproar. As I swam quickly off I could not help watching the little boat, whose narrow fins (oars, you call them, I fancy,) were now hard at work. I must confess that the little affair threaded its way with wonderful skill, while the man with his pointed iron, pricked each of us who got in his

way. Then I heard one of his comrades keep crying out! 'Oars, oars! gripe your oars, and clutch your souls, now! Shove him off!—the whale there!—prick him!—hit him!—Stand up—stand up—and stay so! Spring, men!—pull, men;—never mind their backs—scrape them! scrape away!' And so they got right away from among us all, and never one of us so much as touched them. Would they return us the like kindness and forbearance! Ah, no! I could beat my fins in anguish when I think of the bitterly cruel return they made me, and of the dark, dark time when next I saw the man who patted my head.

The commotion was over at last, the boat got out, and my friends, who had been so terribly frightened, recovered themselves, so that everything remained as before.

However, we did not swim far that night, but just loitered about, enjoying ourselves, and giving time for the wounded to get partly healed. All this time I little knew, what I was soon to discover, that the little boatful of men were not alone, but that there were a great many altogether, collected in one large log,—they call it a ship,—all come out on purpose to do us injury.

The next morning, when first I came up to the surface, I saw right

against the red glow of the sun, as it rose out of the sea, this strange-looking ship. It was not far off, so that I could just catch sight of the little human being up in the 'top,' as as you call it. Moved by curiosity, and not knowing any better, I swam nearer and then began to spout. Suddenly the little creature up in the air began to throw out his fins and to shout, 'There she blows! there she blows!' Then, like a lot of small crabs, the men began to swarm over the ship's side, and when one of them called out, 'Stand by to lower! lower away!' what must they do but all come tumbling over the side, dropping into boats, just like the one I had

seen. I was quite ready and felt inclined to dive again, so that I only just noticed that they were coming towards me. Then I went down and lay for a good while by my mother, troubling myself not at all about the puny enemies I had left on the surface. My mother, as I very well remember, was in a specially gentle humour, and kept caressing me with her fins, and looking all the love imaginable out of her soft, contented eyes. A long, pleasant time I lay there, cooling myself with the calm, peaceful water, and thinking it a most enjoyable kind of life. Then we began gently swimming along together, and when my mother went

up to spout I rose too. But I little knew what was coming.

Hardly had I raised my head out of the water when a sharp pain thrilled through me, and an agony of fear seized me. Never stopping to think, never waiting to look round, I put forth all my strength, worked my fins as they had never worked before, and fled. But still, as I went, I felt the terrible iron sticking in me; the harder I swam, the deeper it seemed to pierce; with bursting heart, and flukes that lashed the waves I persevered in the tremendous race. It was some small comfort to know that my mother was behind me. At last, one extraordinary effort, and the har-

poon was out, tearing the flesh as it left me, and giving way for a great stream of warm blood which I could feel gushing down my sides; but still it was out, and I was free! Diving instantly I felt that I had escaped, and for a few moments lay like a log in mid-water, exhausted and spent, but still rejoicing in that one happy thought. Those quiet moments were but few, when the whole ocean above me seemed shaken; with one fearful crash, and swift as lightning came my mother's form descending through the foaming water; she, too, had been wounded, and had instantly gone down. Down, down, we went together, depth after depth to the very

bed of the ocean, leaving our persecutors many a fathom over our heads. There my poor mother rolled over and over in vain efforts to rid herself of the irons which were tormenting her. I could see the long cords which held them reaching up through the water, and I looked vainly for the ends. At length, I saw her beginning to rise, and strange to say the cords kept drawing up too!

Well, we rose again to the surface, and there, sure enough, was the boat I had seen making after us with all speed. Another horrid iron struck my mother, and almost directly, as she lay motionless with terror, I could see one of our wretched little per-

secutors with a small lance, pierce her just behind the head, and keep moving the thing about till in agony she spouted great clots of blood and went whirling about in her 'flurry.' Then there was a great shout which came to me over the waves. What did it mean? I knew not, but again the shuddering fear seized me, and I swam for my life. I don't know for how long, I cannot measure how time went then. For many a weary rising, spouting and sinking, I had little thought or feeling but fear and horror. No fellow-creature was near; for the whole school had gone, frightened by the danger; and, desolate and wounded, I knew not where to go.

Oh, it was a dreary, dreary night! When the sun had vanished and all was dark, I found myself, I hardly knew how or why, slowly retracing my path on the surface of the still water. Some miserable instinct was leading me back to the place of that fearful fight; in the distance I could see a faint light glimmering, and this I followed until I found myself within a few yards of the ship. Oh, man, man, but thou art very cruel! There lay my poor mother, so still, so quiet, looking so like herself, that I could willingly have gone up to her and fancied her alive. But into her now lifeless spout-hole her captors had stuck a

short stick, with a light at the end, the very glimmer which had led me to find her again! Had they done it on purpose?

The light shone faintly on her long, glossy, black back, and in the sea close beside her there was a little boat with only two men in it, keeping watch, I suppose, till morning. All around I could hear the sharks, and could just see them flocking in on all sides. What was it made them so horribly busy? Ah, me! As I lay there that night, watching it all, and close enough to see and hear everything, a deep, dull, heavy grief seemed to seize upon me, so that I felt as if I had lost all care for anything, and

should not stir even were a dozen harpoons hurled at me. I heard without understanding or caring to understand, the quiet conversation of the two watchers. I could clearly see the man who had patted my head, sitting at his ease, with a tiny kind of smoky spout every now and then coming from his mouth. There they sat and talked, caring little indeed for me or mine.

Of course what they said was to me as meaningless, and far more so, than the roar of the wind, or the noise of the water above me in a storm; but the low sound kept me listening as I lay near my poor mother. When it began to get light I swam

slowly round and round her, and tried to understand what had happened. It was clear that she would never come down again to fondle me down in our watery home; but what the change which had come over her really was I could not tell you even now. At last, other little boats came up to the spot, and I, frightened now at every sight and sound, swam quickly away.

Chapter IV.

Rambles.

The wound in my side troubled me but little, but the recollections of yesterday made me feel very miserable. However, as I went on, the warmth of the sun, and the fresh, cool water, and above all a nice juicy cuttle-fish, drew off my thoughts from the past to the present; and I began to wonder what I should do.

I suppose I must have passed through some miles of sea, when at a little distance I caught sight of a number of my friends spouting. Now, as you perhaps know, it is not until we are getting old that we whales ever choose a lonely life. I have brought my story now to the second stage of my existence, and a very stirring time it is that I am going to recal now.

Seeing, as I said, some dozens of bright spouts not far off, I put strength into my fins, and resolved to join them if possible. I soon saw that they were all youngsters like myself, just beginning life on their own account. I was, of course, very well received, and forthwith took my place among them.

I told them my story, and we agreed that it would be wise to get away from that neighbourhood. So we started on our travels, resolved like sensible whales to know something of the world we lived in, before rearing up each a family of his own.

We were all alive, in the fullest health and strength, but full of a wild, boisterous spirit, which seemed likely to take us through the length and breadth of the ocean in double quick time. In what part of the deep we sailed I do not know, but we certainly got through a great deal of water. Sometimes we would leave the open sea and play along the coast, and often have I floated, basking in the

sun, where, with one eye I could watch the white waves in the far-stretching ocean, and the sparkling spouts of my comrades; while with the other I could overlook some broad piece of green land, the hills, as you call them, rising up high at the back, and plenty of bushy-looking trees here and there. Sometimes from these shores would come boats unlike those I had seen before, full of men with faces not white like yours, but black as my own skin. These little black human beings did not often meddle with us, nor did they come very far out into open sea, but would mostly be content to pass along from one point of land to another, pushing their little boats

at a great rate, and making a great deal of noise, shouting and singing.

Once, I remember, one of these boats did make an attack upon me, but the iron missed me, and a touch of my tail soon sent the little concern to pieces. Somehow or other, one of the black creatures got thrown on to my back in the skirmish, and I carried him along for some way. But I bore him no malice, and before very long he managed to slip off, when what became of him I know not. Before I had been travelling long with this school I had become quite an experienced whale and had seen a great deal of life. Our human enemies were often upon our track, and I was

beginning to comprehend the danger of meeting them. Still, at certain times, we were so left to ourselves that we had almost forgotten our peril. What long, pleasant times those were, when day and night were alike passed in happy self-indulgence, with no cruel iron nor wild race for life to dread. There we lay, getting every day longer and fatter, dosing in the bright sunshine, or playing and sporting down in mid-water, or at other times swimming peacefully along towards a goal never reached; feasting on fresh cuttle-fish and keeping the ravenous sharks in wholesome awe of our superior might and importance.

At these times, when no human-

kind troubled us, we used often to go in nearer land than at any other times, though we always avoided such shores as were covered with men. I remember once, when I was in a very different part of the ocean than this, meeting with a very strange kind of craft, full of very unusual-looking men. We had had several days' commotion at sea, when the wind blew hard and the waves beat about with a great noise. The tempest only helped to freshen us up, making even us toss about in grand style, so that we hardly knew where we were. When, at length, the water got calm and quiet again, we found ourselves, partly by our own will, partly by the force of

the storm, in rather shallow water. Lying there, some little distance from my friends, in a quiet, resting state, I suddenly saw, not many yards from me, a funny little affair. It was a very small boat, and was manned by a strange crew. Floating as I was, a few feet under water, I could see without being seen. The creatures in the boat were evidently men, and not black men either; the one curious thing about them was the long sort of tail hanging from their heads. Their faces were flat and yellow-coloured.

The creatures seemed rather frightened, and were making a great deal of noise. I began quite to pity them, guessing that they were not so much

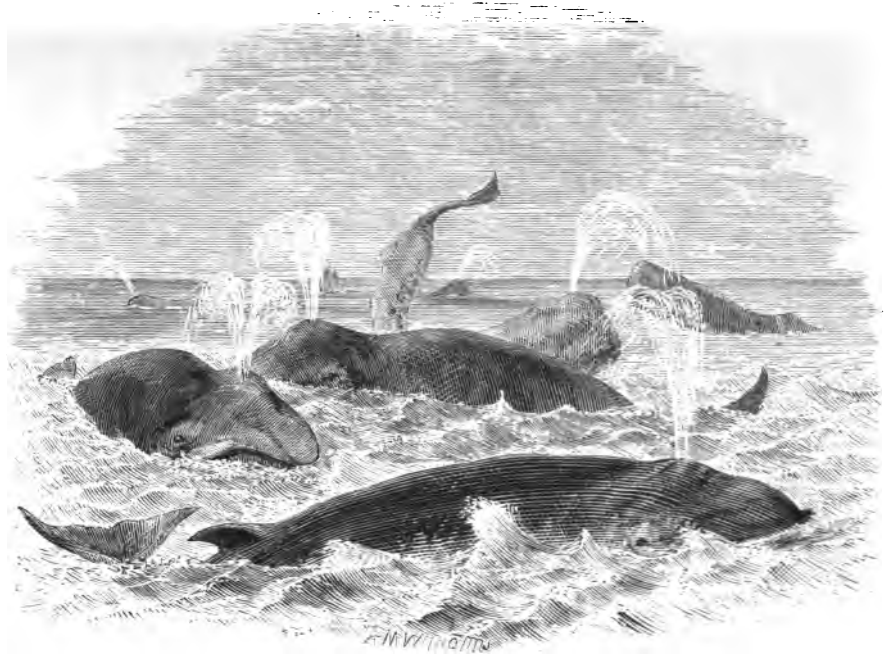
accustomed to stormy weather as myself; but hardly had I raised my head out of water, when, with a great shout, they made off as fast as they could, shouting 'Hiyah, Hijar-r-h!' But we were soon again far away from this part of the deep, swimming long and feeding well and living happily. Of course, we occasionally enlivened the time with a battle, when some fine young fellow would perhaps leave off with a lifelong deformity, but on the whole we were very good friends.

It was while I was still belonging to this school, that I first made acquaintance with many of my own kind, hitherto perfectly unknown to

me. One must always find one's own level; I had begun life with the idea that my mother was the only whale in the whole watery world; then I joined with her a company of our fellow-creatures so large and numerous that in my unbounded conceit I instantly concluded that the whole ocean was peopled with creatures like us; now I was to find that I was neither the largest nor the smallest, neither the rarest nor the most common of living creatures.

I began to understand, about this time, that there are three distinct families of whales, resembling each other in the main points, but still

quite distinct, each from the other two. There are the Greenland whales, or, as the sailors sometimes call them, 'the right whales.' I suppose they mean to distinguish them from the fin-backs, who are 'the wrong whales' for their purpose. Then there are the sperm whales, who chiefly frequent the southern oceans; to which family I belonged. And lastly, there are the Rorqual whales, or fin-backs, the largest, strongest, and most formidable of our kind. Your 'whale-fishers,' as they call themselves, seldom meddle with a fin-back whale; or, if they do, they only repent of it. I heard that one of those men, who was



Finbacks, Greenland, and Sperm Whales.

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noted among 'whale-fishers,' resolved that he would take or kill a Rorqual whale. So he set off in pursuit of two of them; but he could do nothing with them. He might lose his men and his boats, but he could not master a whale of that kind. These noble creatures are of greater length, and much stronger than we are, and they can swim much faster. He struck both of them, but in less than two minutes they were both free again. So rapid were their motions, and so great their strength, that the lines fastened to them snapped like pieces of sea-weed, and the men in the boats were glad to find themselves free from their formidable antagonists.

Well do I remember the first day that I saw this great lord of all whales. It was a dark, chilly morning, the water a dull grey, and the heavens cloudy, and we were all swimming steadily in close company, when, suddenly through our midst, came rushing at tremendous speed, a whale much larger than any of us, with a large fin on the edge of its back. Darting up to the surface he spouted with extraordinary noise and impetuosity, and then started off again on his swift race through the waves. Soon after I noticed a whole company of fin-backs, sporting about near the edge of the sea and sky, and each one, in spouting, made the same

ringing report. We were at this time in the near neighbourhood of a ship, full of human creatures, and more than one of our number did we leave behind us, victims to the harpoon. One of the boats I noticed had flung a spear at a fin-back, how they contrived to get near enough I cannot say; but anyhow the fellow started off at such amazing speed that the rope which held him, suddenly took fire, snapped, and he was free, carrying with him for the rest of his life the weapon which struck him, but which he scarcely seemed to mind. Oh, they are splendid fellows, these fin-back whales!

Before I had fully reached my

prime, when I was still slender and short, I got disgusted with my comrades and resolved to go out alone, to feed where I chose, and to go where I liked. So I went; and for a long time I was wandering about the ocean, making my own observations and laying in stores of experience for future use. Whither I went I could not well make you understand; I roamed along through the deepest parts of the ocean, avoiding all land and all shallows. There are, you know, many wide feeding-grounds abounding in all that is necessary to preserve life and to give pleasure to our kind, and I was constantly passing from one of these pastures to another.

Many a long day did I spend in this kind of roaming, meeting with various adventures, and all the while gradually approaching my maturity.

If I do not mistake, it was now that I visited a part of the ocean but little frequented by our particular family. I had been swimming for some time together with little or no cessation, feeding as I went along, and quietly rejoicing in my lonely freedom. The water through which I was passing seemed to be changing its nature; it struck me as getting colder, though, thick-skinned and warm-blooded as I am, it did not trouble me much. It was one of those pleasant intervals of time when

we are but little annoyed by human creatures. The reason of these intervals I do not know, but we are all beginning to notice now, that there are stated times for their attacks, and we are also beginning to see the wisdom of retiring farther from their reach at the very first alarm.

Well, as I said, I swam on, caring little for the change in the water: indeed, I should hardly have noticed it, but the air above the surface sometimes struck me as somewhat chilly. And now, before long, I began to meet with great floating blocks in the water. These blocks, which I never met with in my native seas, rather perplexed me. More

than once I was startled to feel them pricking and jarring my sides, and much alarmed, I dived hastily to avoid them. But it was only to rise finding myself surrounded by many similar blocks, till at last I recovered my strength of mind and went boldly on in spite of them. Still I must confess it was a relief after a time to meet with many others of my own species, so that I did not feel that I had reached such an utterly remote and unheard-of region. Most of the whales that I met, however, were Right whales, much smaller than myself;—indeed, I fancy my own appearance there created some little excitement. No doubt we of the

Sperm race are more suitably lodged in the open seas than in these narrow, icy passages.

I did not spend any very long time in this strange world; yet while there, I saw and heard things so very different from anything to be found in more rational parts that I have never forgotten them. In many places I found the whole sea completely roofed in by the hard slabs of ice; and then perhaps from one spouting to another I was swimming rapidly underneath. The little fish which I met with in these waters did not seem to be able to live in the cold outside air, for if ever one of them sprang out of the water, he was almost

sure to fall twisted and frozen on the ice-slab. Still they appeared happy enough in their dark, covered home, and frisked about much as other little fishes do. I suppose, if it had not been for my thick blubber, (blanket, you men call it, I think,) I should have felt the upper air as keenly as they did. Oh, it is a fine thing to be so made as to be able to stand all kinds of heat or cold!

So on I went, and it was pleasant by-and-by to see the ice getting less and less, and the water more free and open. For many a moon I roamed about, swimming in many waters and in the distance seeing many lands. But the older I got, the less inclination

did I feel to leave the deeper floods for the shallow. And I was getting on now, beginning to feel myself of some age and experience; my fins were stronger, my tail more powerful, and my powers in many ways greatly increased.

The time was approaching when I should grow weary of a lonely life, but as yet it had nothing but pleasure in it. I had much that was enjoyable, rambling, feeding, floating and sporting, some narrow escapes, some fights, some aches and pains. Thus time went on till the great change in my life took place.

Chapter V.

Story of a Fight.

And now, the course of my long, lonely wanderings, having brought me once more into my own native waters, I suddenly found all the instincts of my nature combining to draw me to one particular part of those waters. I found many of my kind of my own age, taking the same course; and whether it was the force of example, or the force of some

natural instinct I know not, but so it was, that abandoning my rambles in the unfathomable ocean, I was rapidly swimming towards the shallow waters of a fresh, blue bay.

In this bay, with its sparkling waves, its high rocks, and its abundant feed, I soon found myself in the company of great numbers of whales, many of which were of the other sex. Together we sported about, enjoying the pleasures of each other's company, till the very water seemed alive with our gambols. We played with each other's flukes, tumbled over each other, swam round and round, and finally fed side by side. And when at last it seemed as well to leave this pleasant

spot, you might have seen me swimming off in company with a fair young whale of most pleasing proportions and the softest eyes.

I had not, indeed, won my future partner in life without a struggle. A troublesome rival perplexed me for a considerable length of time. She showed him little favour, but he was most pertinacious in the pursuit of her. He seemed rather afraid of me, and usually kept at some distance when I was by her side; but so soon as my back was turned, he was sure to be pressing his suit. At last, one day, coming rather suddenly up from the lower waters, where I had been looking after some food, I found

him evidently annoying her by his entreaties. I thought that it was useless to dally with the matter any longer; so rising suddenly under him, I gave him a roll over; which you may suppose is deemed an incivility among us whales. He resented it, as I expected, coming at me with open mouth. I was not at all behind-hand, but seizing his lower jaw with right good will, I gave him a wrench and a shake which I fancy he will never forget. He found that he had met with his match, and gave a sort of groan which, among us whales is understood to mean, 'Enough!' I therefore let him go, with a reply, of our own sort, which

he quite understood, for, 'Don't let me catch you here again!' He went down, in dudgeon, and in despair, and she was troubled with his attentions no more. We both thought it time to put a final stop to this sort of thing, and accordingly, our union was at once decided and made known; after which no whale would have approached her without quite understanding that he must first have a life or death struggle with me.

Ah, bright and happy was the life I lived now for many a month and many a year! Together we roamed the mighty deep, spying out its many creeks and corners, peeping up the long rivers, breasting the wild,

uproarious storms, dozing away the long, silent calms, and rising and sinking in the unfathomable depths. How she loved me! How her every look followed my movements! What dangers she faced for me, risking her very life for mine! I could give her no such devotion in return, for cold is our nature compared to that of our mates, and selfish indeed is our conduct when contrasted with theirs.

She had several young ones; each of which she tended and fondled with the same inexpressible affection; a love which I only imperfectly shared. When very young they gave a great deal of trouble, were very stupid, and were for ever getting their dam into

perplexity of some kind. And when they grew bigger they soon left her, and we seldom saw or heard of them again.

My mate and I did not always remain together; in fact, when feeding, I generally left her and went off on my own account. Somehow I always knew where to find her again, and I was never very long absent from her side. We travelled through vast tracts of water together and had many an adventure in common. She was a swift swimmer, and had a very light, graceful movement of the tail and fins, and I believe her company made me less clumsy than I had been before.

We were travelling along in this way one dark night, I remember, when a most unusual circumstance befel us. We were going 'head-out,' and I well recollect how unusually dark and stormy the sea and sky were looking. It is just such a season as this that brings out all that is wild and fierce in my nature; I delight in the gloom and in the noise of a tempest;—yielding myself entirely to the billows, I revel in their stormy tossing to and fro. In such spirits as these, I was making my boisterous way on this particular night, when my attention was suddenly caught by a great light breaking out in the heavy masses of cloud on the

horizon. What could it be? Clearly not my old acquaintance the sun, for I had seen him dip into the waves some time before. As clearly not the moon, for the light was red and flaring, most unlike the white light which so often lit up the nightly waters. What then? With all speed and with much wonder I struck out for the distant light, conscious as I went that my mate was close behind me.

Fiercely breasting the boiling waters, we soon came within a few lengths of the strange light, when there gradually broke upon our ears, above the noise of the storm, a kind of dull roaring mixed with cracking

and splitting sounds, and amidst it all what I in an instant recognised as the human voice raised in loud shrieks and sudden cries. I had ventured very close and was lying with head above water, when I started back, frightened and pained by something hot and scorching falling on my head. Hastily diving, I swam for a few moments some fathoms down and then rose again to find myself on the other side of the extraordinary blaze. But here the water far and wide was strewed with pieces of smoking wreck, and the more the billows dashed about, the more the wind rose, the fiercer seemed to become the roaring, blazing fire. Far below me and all around

me the fish were flying from the spot; my mate I had lost sight of, and knew not whether she had left like them, or was like me chained to the place by some magic power. Restlessly, eagerly, I swam round and round the frightful conflagration, listening with thrilling ears to the new, strange cries that proceeded from it. A few minutes more, and in the midst of the seething, furious water I saw a little boat striving with all its puny might to force its way beyond the reach of the wild uproar. Another few minutes, and with a great explosion the clouds, and the waters far and wide, were covered with burning atoms, the floods seemed to open, and the whole light

was suddenly extinguished. Startled by all this uproar, I instantly went down, taking refuge as usual from everything terrible in the quiet, dark depths of the ocean. But soon collecting myself, I returned to the surface at very nearly the same spot where I had sunk. This I did not do, however, till I had somewhat investigated the strange, hot mass which had gone down to the bottom before me. A terrible hissing the waters made, as they sucked it in and drew it down. For some time I lay close to it, and could see the queer conglomeration of things, smoked and black, that were there all jammed together. It would be of no use at all for me to

try and describe them, the round wooden things all running over with some kind of juice; the long sticks, and the coloured clothes, and strangest of all, the human creatures who, with the breath choked out of them, fell from each side of the mass and sank before it did to the bottom of the sea.

It did not take long for the great scalding mass of wood, and cloth, and ashes to get cool down there on the flat bottom of the sea; and before any long time had passed, the neighbourhood was swarming with the noisy, quarrelling sharks. In and out they went, pushing and fighting one another, and many a fat morsel

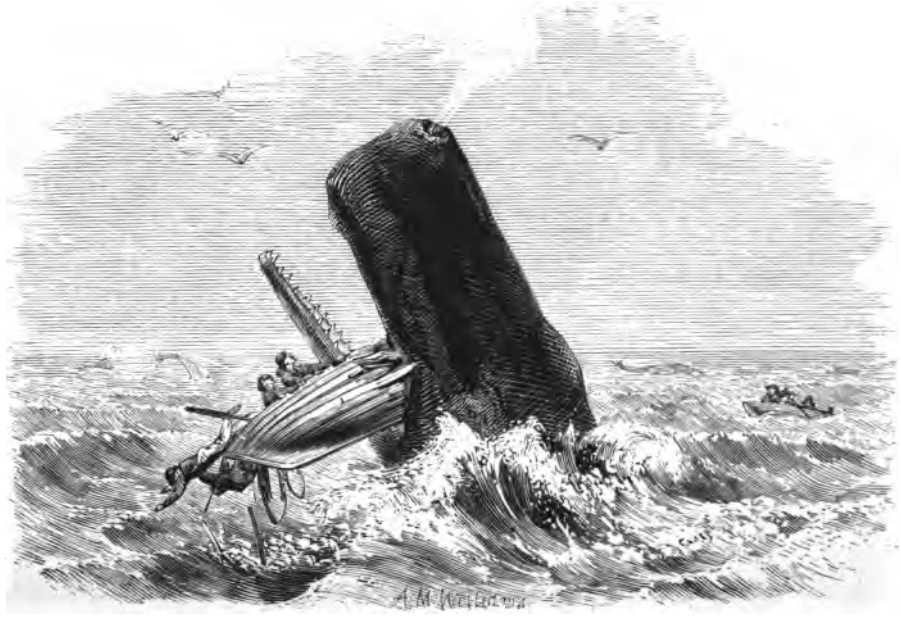
they seemed to find in the midst of the tangled heap. But by this time I was betaking myself again to the surface. Rising rather suddenly I was near upsetting the little boat I had seen before. Poor little thing! it was sadly tossed about by the stormy winds and waves, and many as are the boats that I have seen in my time, I do not know that I ever saw one so heavily laden or so crowded with human creatures. They made but little way and I fancy they had but little hope of ever seeing land again.

Again we returned, without distinctly intending it, to the scenes of my youth. I remembered the bays,

the shores, the feeding-ground of my early years. I met with old playmates of my childhood; and at last, in the course of a long day's swim round all the scenes of my youthful days, I recognised my old father. We had not met much since my mother's death. He was now a grand old whale, of great size and long experience. He was pleased to see me, liked my mate well, and hoped that we should endeavour to keep in his neighbourhood, and see him as often as we could.

Many had been his contests with the 'whale-fishers,' as they call themselves; and wonderful had been some of his escapes. Hence his knowledge

of you men, and of your ways, had continually increased, and he now knew better how to deal with them. And, very naturally, he was less afraid of them than formerly. He told me, often, that there were only two safe ways of treating them; either to get quite away from them, or else, if this was not easy, to knock their boats to pieces, and so force them to fly away from you. More than once, he saved me and my mate from perils of this kind. On one occasion he saw a boat evidently set upon driving a harpoon into her side, and he suddenly rose under it, and upset it with his head, throwing all the men into the sea, and so my poor mate escaped.



'Took it between his jaws.'

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On another day, months after this, one of these boats had succeeded in planting one of their irons in my ribs, and I was rushing away in a fright, when my father, seeing the case to be a serious one, went right at the boat; took it between his jaws, and crushed one end of it to pieces. The men were all thrown into confusion, the boat began to sink, lines and lancing-irons were all let go or thrown away, and that which was sticking in me soon dropped out, and I got clear off.

My father had a friend, too, a magnificent whale, as old as himself, and as large and powerful. He, as well as my father, had learned much

of the tricks and devices of you men, and knew how to defeat them. He had escaped their hands many a time, and hence he grew, by degrees, to be very little afraid of them. But they conquered him at last, after the greatest fight I ever saw. The struggle was so long, and so fierce, that it is worth relating to you.

He had observed the arrival of one or two ships in his neighbourhood, and kept a sharp look-out accordingly. He was not, now, so fearful of them as to fly at once that part of the ocean, and to get altogether away. He believed that he could either keep out of their reach, or could defeat them, if they attacked

him. It grew dark, one fine evening, and he was cautious enough to get a good way off the nearest of these ships, before he ventured to take a few naps. When the sun rose next morning, he could see that the ship was in motion, and apparently trying to get nearer to him. Soon, he saw the boats let down, and the men crowd into them, and begin to row in the direction where he lay. At once, therefore, he went down, and took a good swim, under water, in a contrary direction, so that when he came up again, he had left them a long way behind. In fact, though the ship was visible, the boats were not. But in getting away from them,

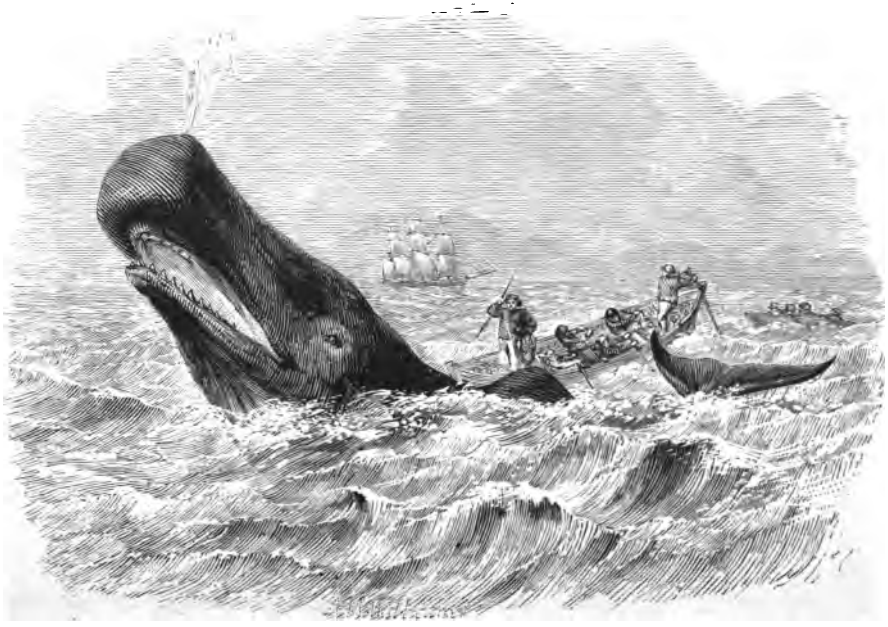
he had brought himself much nearer another enemy, a ship which last night was scarcely in sight. As soon as he began to spout, he heard that abominable cry which they always set up, of 'There she blows! there she blows!' So that he had foes behind, and foes in front of him. On the right hand lay a long line of coast and shallow water; and of course he could not move in that direction. So he turned to the left, which was more out to sea, and here he thought he should be safe. But in less than half an hour, he descried a third enemy, coming from the offing, and soon the boats were launched from this ship also, and were pulling

towards him. In fact, he was a fine, large whale, and all those ships had their eyes upon him, longing to capture and kill him, and already reckoning how many barrels of oil he would yield.

Well; he was not much alarmed, though he began to see that he should have to fight or run for his life. He thought it best to make for the open sea, and therefore he resolved to brave this third ship and her boats, and went boldly in that direction, hoping to gain the deeper waters. To give them a taste of his courage, he went straight at the nearest boat of these last assailants, struck it with his head, overset it, and then went

down, without finding himself touched by the lances or harpoons.

He stayed below as long as he could, which, you know, with us whales is about an hour. But our enemies know this well, and before he came up again, the boats of the other two ships had pulled towards him, and were coming to the spot where they saw a struggle going on. He had taken care to swim a good distance, so that when he came to the surface, it was far from the place where he went down. But he could not tell what was going on above, and, unhappily, he rose just under the boats of the first ship, from which he had escaped early in the morning.



'Lodged his harpoon in the old fellow's side.'

P. 103.

So soon as he saw this, he went under the nearest of the boats, rose beneath it, and threw it over, sending all the men into the water. But one of them, before he had struck the boat, lodged his harpoon in the old fellow's side, and before he could get away, the second boat came alongside, and drove in another. He brought his tail quickly round, and with one blow struck that boat so that she could hardly float, and two of the men were knocked out of her into the sea. Still, two of the irons were in his side, and the third boat of this set got hold of the lines, and so 'made fast,' as they call it, to the brave old whale.

Still, he was not beaten. It was not the first time he had felt the pain of a harpoon, nor the first time he had been in real danger. Leaping out of the water, he threw himself upon this third boat, and effectually smashed it. So one of his foes,—one of the three parties that were pursuing him, was disposed of. But still, he felt two of their detestable irons striking in his side.

And when he turned round to get away, he saw other enemies near at hand. The two remaining boats of the last, the third ship, were now pulling might and main towards him, and in a moment one of them had seized upon one of the lines connected

with the harpoons, and so had 'made fast' to him. But he soon disposed of this assailant. Suddenly going down, while the men in the boat had fastened the line to something on board, he dragged that boat under water, and in the struggle the harpoon was drawn out of him. As for the other one, the line seemed to be loose, so it gave him no concern. But after a scuffle of this kind, he could not remain under water long. When he rose, he found two fresh boats, one a little before him, and the other not far behind him, waiting for his appearance. His blood was now up, and he rushed at the one in front and would have instantly demolished

it, but, by a desperate effort, the sailors managed to pull it a little on one side, and he missed it. As he rushed by, he felt a third harpoon driven into him, and he set off at once, at full speed, dragging the boat after him. The other boat of that set caught hold of a rope, and were towed together with their mates. With such power and velocity did he swim, that it was with difficulty the crews kept their boats from filling with water. In his rage, he did not care where he went, and he actually swam close to the ship to which the boats belonged. A rope was thrown from the ship into the boats, and made fast; so that now the poor whale

had the ship itself, as well as two boats, fastened to him. Still, he gallantly swam on, though his speed was much reduced by the enormous weight he was towing.

This slowness of speed, however, finally ruined him, for it enabled three more boats, belonging to the second ship, to come to the rescue of their comrades. The case was now desperate, and he fought for his life like a hero. Turning upon his nearest enemies, he disposed of one boat in an instant, by a blow of his head which smashed and sank it. The next was more troublesome, for it fastened in him a fourth harpoon; but a full and direct stroke of his tail

disabled this also. Three boats, however, were still afloat, and he felt his strength growing less, and his fate approaching. One came up and flung another harpoon, but missed, and the whale brought his tail under it and flung it into the air. The next drove a lance into his side, and the blood rushed forth. With his head he pushed this boat up against the next, and overset it. There remained but one more, but from this one more harpoon came. The brave old fellow now saw that escape was impossible. The line which had been thrown from the ship still held fast to one of the harpoons which were sticking in his side; and now, here was another

fastening him to this, the last boat. With one dying effort he threw himself upon this boat, and instantly went down, dragging it with him. He must have broken his heart, or swallowed the water as he went, for the remaining line, made fast on board the ship, broke; he disappeared, and never again came to the surface. His enemies had destroyed a whale whom they had long known and dreaded; but at what a cost! Nine boats were broken up or greatly damaged, and, though most of the men were picked up, at least four or five of them must have perished with their brave antagonist.

I witnessed most of this from a

distance. The boats were too busy with their pursuit of this great whale to pay much attention to me; and when I saw, after two hours' waiting, that he was gone for ever, I swam quietly and sadly away. I could not help thinking that, if one of you human beings had so gallantly defended himself, and so bravely fallen, your tongues, which run more glibly than ours, would have made much of his valour, and would have mourned his death.

Chapter VI.

Some Famous Whales.

We have our heroes, indeed, as I suppose that you human beings have also. But I strongly suspect that you say little of these; perhaps know little of them. I fancy that your boastful 'whale-fishers,' as they call themselves, carry home plenty of stories of the whales that they have killed, but say very little of those

who get the better of them. Do not you generally hear a great deal of the poor Sperm or Greenland whales, who are slaughtered by hundreds every year, and little or nothing of the mighty Rorqual, who, except by some accident, you never can touch?

Of my own experience or personal knowledge I will say little, but we whales can make each other understand, and besides great deeds which I have seen, I have heard, from time to time, of many of our tribe who have learnt to understand your devices, and who have, for years, proved too much for either your craft or your weapons. I know that there have

been whales whom your 'whale-fishers' by degrees have learned to know, and whom they have been heard to call by names which they had given them. There was one whom they called 'Timur Jack,' who defeated his enemies, year after year, and cost them many boats and the lives of many men. He became very well known and much dreaded among them; but at last they contrived to deceive him, by means of a barrel thrown into the sea, and floated down to him. While he was watching this, not knowing what it meant, a boat stole up on the other side, and gave him his death-wound. But even then he cost them dear; for both

boats and men suffered terribly before he died.

Another famous whale the pursuers called 'New Zealand Tom,' and a costly purchase they had in his case. On one single morning, he upset or smashed to pieces eight or nine of their boats, and drowned many of their men. He fairly tired them out and got away. They killed him a year or two after this, and they found him, like an old warrior, covered with scars, and with several old harpoons still sticking in him.

As to our cousins the Rorquals, their history is altogether one of triumphs. You have found a few of them, I believe, stranded by low tides,

and have killed them, or taken possession of their dead bodies; but I doubt if you ever killed one of these noble whales in a fair fight. One of the most active of your whale-fishers tried, I believe, to do it; and struck his irons into two Rorqual whales, but he was only too glad to get away from them. If his lines had not instantly snapped, he would have lost his boats and his men. If he could really have 'made fast' to a whale of this kind, the Rorqual would not have been long in knocking his boats into very little pieces. Up in the northern seas, I have heard, a whale-fishing boat was rash enough to fasten to a Rorqual. In a very few minutes

he dragged the boat under the nearest ice-float, and neither boat nor men were ever again heard of. There was another case, I believe, well known to your Yankee friends, in which a ship from a place called New London, obstinately persisted in trying to take a Rorqual. They lost, in half an hour, eleven of their men, but they could not take the gallant Fin-back. Half-a-dozen of their ships would not have been a match for him.

These great whales do not content themselves with cuttle-fish or shrimps; they like codfish, herrings, and pilchards equally well. One of them, I know, took up his abode near the northern part of your island, near

the mouth of what you call the Firth of Forth. Here he found plenty of food, but the fishermen did not like him, for he often spoiled their sport. Still, they could neither catch him, nor kill him, nor drive him away. He lived there, caring for none of them, for twenty summers and winters, and died, at last, to their great joy, by venturing into shallow water, and getting stranded. He was too strong and vigorous for them all his life; and yet he was by no means a large whale of his kind.

As to our other two families, the Greenland sort and the South Sea whale, I admit that they are incautious, indolent, and easily frightened.

They seldom learn to fear you human beings until it is too late,—until your harpoons are sticking in their sides. But when any of us get an insight into the real nature of the danger, and are aware of the character of your proceedings, you do not find it very easy to catch or overcome them. I fancy that there have been whales, and are some still living, which have cost you much more than ever their carcases could be worth. And as to the head of our family, the Fin-back whales, they are altogether more than a match for you, and I believe that you generally keep out of their way, and say as little as possible about them.

I once spent a whole morning with a fine whale of this kind, who was so good as to slacken his usual speed, and to give me his company. I found that he pitied and grieved for the many poor whales of our sort whom he saw, from time to time, fall into the hands of their pursuers. He grew quite angry while talking about it. 'Why are you all so heavy and stupid?' he said. 'When do you see us allow those horrid creatures to get the better of us? It seems so foolish for a great and powerful animal, such as we all are, to allow these little wretches to conquer and kill us! What chance have they, if we are but awake and look about

us? Their strength is nothing when compared with ours; and they are not in their own element. Only knock their cockle-shells of boats to pieces, and there 's an end of them. If a whale, be he Rorqual, or Sperm, or one of the Northern family,—were only to determine that he would not allow any of those detestable boats in his neighbourhood, what chance could they have? Go at a boat with your head, you knock it to pieces; give it a slap with your tail, and down it goes. Dive, and rise under it, it is upset. Or, if it is very troublesome, throw yourself upon it, and men and boat are at once disposed of. One crunch of your jaw breaks it up;

one fling of your tail sends the wretches into the air. It is really astonishing, that, in spite of all this, these abominable creatures will sometimes kill two or three large whales in the course of a single morning. I am often tempted to come into the quarrel and despatch some of them, as I easily could; but I promised my father to keep as far away from them as I could, and I must keep my word. They don't trouble me much,—in fact, I believe they know better. If I found any of them attempting to play tricks with me, I'd soon make short work with them.'

I listened to my friend's talk, and I think I was all the wiser for it; at

least, I endeavoured to act upon these hints on many subsequent occasions. Even that same week, I found two or three of their boats after me one morning. I kept my eye upon them, and, when I perceived that one of them was trying to creep up behind me, so that I should not see what the wretches were about, I turned quickly round. They were taken rather a-back; but they were very near me, and one of them had his horrid harpoon in his hand, and was watching for an opportunity of driving it into my side. I brought my tail to bear upon him, and with one blow I knocked him into the water, and smashed in one side of the boat.

The men in it were all in confusion, for she seemed to fill with water. My friend, whose harpoon I had knocked out of his hand, thought it better, instead of trying to get into the sinking boat, to swim off to another which was a few hundred yards off. I was savage enough, just then, to determine that he should not do this. So I swam after or along with him, not being bloody-minded enough to kill him out of hand, which, indeed, we whales never intentionally do. So we had a swim for it,—a sort of race; but he soon found that I could swim twice as fast as he could. I soon headed him, and placed myself right between him and the other boat.

He was forced to turn back, and make for his own boat, damaged as it was. And so I left him. As for the second boat, I took good care that it should not come near me.

Chapter VII.

More Conflicts and Losses.

My father himself was in no respect inferior to the brave old whales of whom I have been speaking. Many a time have I seen him defy and utterly rout a whole swarm of assailants. On one occasion I observed two ships contend for the honour of killing him,—three or four boats putting off from each, and racing each other for the honour of

planting in his side the first harpoon. He coolly awaited their approach; went down, and rose under the foremost boat, upsetting it and throwing the crew into the sea. The next that came up he met with his head, giving it a blow which shook it nearly to pieces. A third neared him, and the harpoon was raised, but my father had brought his tail round, and with one blow, he sent the principal man in the boat flying into the air. He fell into the sea, and sank, and the crew were too busy in looking after him to continue their chase. Another boat was now coming up, but this he took within his jaws, and crunched up. Meanwhile a fifth had stolen

'Sent the principal man in the boat flying into the air.'

P. 126.

up behind him, and a harpoon, at last, was lodged in his side. He went down instantly, and luckily, the line got hitched somehow, the boat's head was pulled under water, and the crew had to use their hatchets to cut it, or they would all have gone down. I lay a little way off, and saw this struggle, which occupied a very little time. But now the remaining boats, having lost their expected prey, turned towards me, and I found myself suddenly in danger. Proud of my father's example, I tried to do as he had done, but I had neither his power nor his experience. This first boat, happily, I caught before it was alongside of me, and

turning rapidly, I gave it a blow which broke it in the middle, and so I was rid of one assailant. But the next had crept up behind me, and I felt the horrid harpoon in my side. I set off at my greatest speed, dragging the boat after me. I swam for some time, and then going down, to baffle them I turned and came back again. I had imagined I should find the sea clear at this spot, and that the rest of the boats would have gone after me. But one remained, watching for my father's expected rise. So soon as I came up, this boat came towards me, and, as I was not ready to go down again, another harpoon struck me. I was again flying, when, just by,

the majestic form of my father came up out of the water; and the moment he saw how matters stood, he gave one prodigious bound, and threw himself across that wretched boat, whose harpoon had just struck me. Smashed into a multitude of pieces, the boat was seen no more, but the crew swam after the fragments, and supported themselves for a time, until some of their comrades came to their aid and picked them up. Meanwhile we had both lowered ourselves a little in the water, and succeeded in getting safely away.

But, alas, we could not be always in my father's neighbourhood; and those relentless men, unceasing in their

persecution of us, found, at last, an opportunity of inflicting on me the most cruel injury. Our great disadvantage, as you doubtless know, in our struggles against these people who are always hunting us, is this:—we swim along the ocean-depths, and feed as we have opportunity; but, not being fishes, it is necessary for us sometimes to come to the surface for fresh air. We rise for this purpose,—not dreaming of any danger, when our watchful enemies, who are ever on the look-out, instantly steal up to us in one of their boats, and plunge one of their cruel irons into our side. When this has once been done, the poor whale's chance of escape is but

small. Half mad with pain and fright, he dives into the depth of ocean, or rushes off at the greatest speed he can put forth. But still the iron sticks in his side, and the line fastens the boat to him; and thus, when he comes to the surface again for breath, his enemies are ready to drive another of their harpoons, and then another, into him, until, faint with loss of blood, he falls a prey to them.

Now, one day, a ship of this dangerous kind came into the bay where we were chiefly living; and my mate, having a young one, could not easily get away to the open sea. I tried, therefore, to draw their at-

tention from her, and had resolved, in case they attacked me, what I would do. I thought that, if I could only swim fast enough and far enough, I must be able to beat them in the race. But first, I tried to draw their attention away from my mate and the young one, and to do this. I kept near them, to attract the notice of the sailors. At last, however, after going down, I found myself, on rising, too near one of our pursuers. Before I could get breath enough to dive again, I felt the harpoon in me; so I had nothing for it but to put my plan in operation, and to set off at the utmost speed I could make, to get as far away as possible from that spot.

As I rushed off, dragging the boat after me, a second boat caught a rope thrown from the first, and both were lashed together. I cared nothing for this, but put forth my whole strength, swimming out to the open sea at the utmost speed I could make. It was not then near sunset; on I went, pulling the boats after me. Time passed on, but I stayed not. The sun set, and it began to grow dark. I knew that we must be at a great distance from the ship and the bay, and at last I could hear the men shout to one another, 'Can you see her?' and sometimes 'Yes,' and sometimes 'No' would be the answer. At last, as dark night was

coming on, I heard the joyful words, 'Let go!—Cast off,' and I found myself free. Not willing to lose their ship and be left alone on the ocean without stores or food, my greedy pursuers gave up their prey. I turned, and could see them bring their boats' heads round, and begin their weary way back again, empty.

But alas, though I had foiled them, it was but in part. Two boats had followed me, but there was a third! My mate, terrified at what she saw of the attack on me, took little care of herself. She was swimming out to see what she could of my fate, when the remaining boat pulled across her course, and lodged an iron in her

side. Her young one hindered her flight. She only went down, and soon came up again, merely to receive another wound. In short, when I warily approached the bay, on the following morning, the horrid sight met my eyes, of my poor mate's dead body lashed to the ship's side, while the wretched sharks were already at work on the mangled remains of the poor little one. I must pause for a time; I have already said enough of such dreadful scenes. Yet I must finish this part of my story by adding that, when they caught sight of me, though busy at their butcher's work, they spared hands enough to man one boat, which soon came after me.

But they had better have left me alone. I was both savage and almost in despair. So, instead of running away, I kept my head towards my advancing foes; yet so that I could observe their movements. When they came near enough, I gave one motion of my fins, came upon them in a moment, and took the boat between my teeth and demolished it. There was an end of their attack upon me. Another boat put off immediately to pick up the men; but they thought it best to leave me alone. So I soon turned sadly away.

Chapter VIII.

Farewell.

That day, and the night which followed it, were miserable and wearisome ones. I felt inclined to wish that I had never been born; or that I had belonged to the unconquered Rorqual tribe. My father I had not seen for several days, but I now felt a desire to meet with him, and it so happened that before the next day had far advanced, I saw his hump

rising out of the water, not more than a mile or two distant. A few minutes more brought us together, and his first inquiry was, for my mate and child. As well as I could, I told him the mournful story; and I quickly saw that his anger was rising into rage. 'What did you do with them?' he cried. 'Do—what could I do?' was my answer. But it only added to his wrath. 'I won't leave the matter so,' exclaimed he. 'I'll punish them yet:—where are the villains?'

I told him where I fancied the ship now lay, and he rushed off, leaving me to follow. I have told you that he was a great and majestic whale, shewing a large hump out of

the water, and having a broad forehead, and a tail of tremendous weight and power. His experience of the 'whale-fishers,' too, had been such, and his encounters with them so successful, that many of them held him in more fear than he did them. I felt, therefore, that when his anger was thus roused, something serious was likely to happen; and I followed as quickly as I could, though, being in more fear of the men than he was, I tried to keep out of sight as much as possible.

The ship was soon descried, and he swam straight towards it. I was not far off, and I heard the shouts of the sailors when they descried him.

A boat was quickly let down, but as I neared the ship I heard some one who seemed in command cry out, 'I think you'd better not! I know that whale, and he looks dangerous this morning!' But the boat was already filling with men, and, as he did not peremptorily call them back, they were off in an instant, and began to pull towards my father.

But he instantly put in practice a manœuvre which he had often tried with success. He went down, and moved under water towards them, and measuring his distance well, he rose under the boat, turning it over, and throwing all the men, irons, lines and all, into the water. So for a

time they were disposed of. But this little encounter, instead of cooling his anger, only seemed to increase it, and I saw by the agitation of his fins and tail, that he was lashing himself up to some desperate deed.

He went down again, and rose on the other side of the ship. He took a little circuit, and then came right at her with all his power and weight. I heard the timbers groan and crack, the masts shivered, and the men on deck were thrown hither and thither. I don't think my father escaped some injury, for I saw a shudder; but his blood was now up,—he took another little swim out, and came back more furiously than before. The ship had

been tried and shaken by his first attack, but, when he struck her again, I saw timbers open and planks fall, and the crew were in a perfect commotion of alarm. She now heeled over on one side, and was evidently settling down in the water. Her remaining boats were lowered as quickly as possible and the men crowded into them. But their chance was a poor one; the neighbouring coast was an inhospitable one; and land inhabited by man was many days' sail away.

As for my father, with the destruction of the ship, which had now gone down, his anger seemed to vanish. He knew that the fate of the

sailors must be a terrible one, and he did not stop to follow them, or to carry his vengeance any farther. We swam off, and mournful thoughts of our own loss returned. We could not bring the dead to life again. He told me that the place and neighbourhood had now become hateful to him, and he should pay a visit to some other coasts and seas. That evening he left me, and I have not seen him since. Whether he was seriously injured in his encounter with the ship, and has since died; or whether he merely avoids the place, I know not.

And now, concluded the whale, I am again alone in the world. I

have formed no plans; nor can I tell what I may resolve upon doing. But you will admit that I have no cause to love you human creatures; and that if harmlessness and good nature were not a leading part of the character of our family, I should have made an end of you and your boat long before this.

Here,—Philip remarked,—Our conversation and our friendship was brought to a sudden ending; for while the Whale was uttering these closing sentences, I observed, quietly and slowly coming round the headland of the bay, a ship, which from

its trim, I judged to be a whaling-vessel. My new friend saw it too, and soon exclaimed, "I fancy that it is time for me to be off. I have told you already that I have learned this from the past,—to keep as far as possible from those ships and those people; so, good-bye to you,—I will be far enough away, before they reach this place, where, I suppose, you will be glad to see them." He then gave a stroke or two with his fins and tail, and was soon out of sight.

And I was, indeed, as he concluded, glad to be released from my position. I was soon perceived by the look-out man of the whaling-

ship, and a boat was lowered to bring me on board. A few days more gave me an opportunity of rejoining my own vessel, and so my first adventure in "Whale-fishing" ended.

But my mind had undergone a change during my conversation with this sociable whale. I had been made acquainted with some of a whale's thoughts and feelings, and was thus able to "put myself in his place." I no longer felt the same anxiety to witness the killing of one of these creatures,—in fact, I felt a degree of horror at the thought. My companions on shipboard laughed at my new-born doubts and scruples. "What is the great difference," they asked,

" between killing a whale and killing a salmon; except that the first is by far the noblest and bravest adventure of the two? Yet even ladies delight in taking their rod, and enticing on to a horrid hook a fine, handsome, joyous fish, who has been just delighting himself in his native element, and now finds himself entangled by the jaw, dragged on shore, and left to die on the bank or in a basket, and all in order that two or three ladies and gentlemen may eat him for dinner. In our case the prize is far greater; we hope to win, in an hour's desperate fight, 500*l.* or 1000*l.*, and, after all, the whale only knows an hour or two's suffering."

I mused upon these reasonings, and by degrees my dream, like a dissolving view, seemed gradually to fade away. I slept, I know not how much longer, and then some noise aroused me; I awoke, and it was the dawn of day.

Chapter IX.

Thoughts about the Story.

Philip Melville had ended his 'dream,' or whatever else it may be called; for it is most likely that sleeping and waking thoughts had mingled themselves together. His father had seen him at work on his manuscript-book, and asked him, one day, what it was that he had in hand. Philip was rather reluctant to show this, his first attempt at anything like narrative;

but he could not refuse, and therefore handed it up,—remarking that he hoped his father would be a merciful critic.

Mr. Melville did not wish to discourage his son in these juvenile attempts, nor yet to elate him unduly by any decided praise. He therefore closed the MS. with a quiet remark, that he had seen worse things of the kind. 'You have warmed towards your subject,' he added, 'and towards the close you seem to be growing fond of your whale. And, truly, the forty-first chapter of Job is warrant enough for even a more glowing description.'

'The forty-first of Job!' said

Philip, —'that is the chapter which describes "Leviathan:" but I thought it was a description of the crocodile.'

'No, the old Jewish interpreters,' said Mr. Melville, 'all refer it to the whale, and they must be supposed to have understood their own language. Besides which, the one hundred and fourth Psalm seems to decide the question: read the 25th and 26th verses.'

Philip read,—'So is this great and wide sea, wherein are things creeping innumerable, both small and great beasts: there go the ships, and there is that Leviathan, whom thou hast made to play therein.' He added another question:—

'But was the whale known to the people of Syria and of the East?'

'Yes,' said Mr. Melville, 'there are many old records which make that quite clear. And skeletons of whales have been found in several places on the coasts of the Mediterranean.'

'But what of his scales,' asked Philip, 'which are described as "his pride;"—can that language be applied to the whale?'

'Those verses have been the chief reason why men have supposed the crocodile to be the creature described: but, remember, no one applies this description in Job to the blubber-whales. It can only apply to the

highest class,—the mighty Rorqual; and we cannot be sure that none of these have ever been armour-clad. But look at the whole tenor of the description. It sets forth "the king over all the children of pride,"—that is, among the animal creation. And how can we apply such language as the following to the loathsome crocodile?—"He maketh the deep to boil like a pot; he maketh the sea like a pot of ointment: he maketh a path to shine after him; one would think the deep to be hoary." Nothing can be more exact, as applied to the whale. "Upon earth there is not his like, who is made without fear."'

'But,' interrupted Philip, 'how can this be said of the whale, who is such a timid creature?'

'The blubber-whales are harmless, and can easily be frightened,' said his father, 'but all naturalists agree that the Rorqual, the chief of whales, is fearless: nor has he any cause for fear, for no enemy, human or animal, can harm him. On the whole, the portraiture is that of one who is mighty, and pre-eminent among the works of God, and this cannot be said of a reptile like the crocodile. But what sight can be more wonderful than that of a vast creature, like the Rorqual whale, of the immense weight of three or four hundred tons,—

which is nearly nine hundred thousand pounds,—yet actually springing out of the water, so as to show his whole body flung into the air at a height of twenty or thirty feet above the surface of the sea! This is indeed stupendous, and comes up to the glowing and aspiring language of these closing verses. Let us, however, turn from this part of the subject,—was there any other question that occurred to you while you were writing?'

Philip said, that the principal question which had haunted his thoughts was, whether it was a lawful and right thing for men to go a whale-hunting? Whether, merely in order to get 'blubber' to be melted into oil,

it was a justifiable thing to persecute and to kill the poor whales, who seemed to be about as inoffensive creatures as could anywhere be found?

His father remarked, in answer to this, that, although it was a bad kind of argument to justify one questionable action by citing another, still, it was quite clear that the pursuit of a whale was equally justifiable with the pursuit of many other creatures, whom we constantly hunt and kill in order to get their flesh for food, or their skins for clothing.

'The principal justification,' he went on to say, 'for all these things is found in the command and the power given to Noah. "The fear of

you and the dread of you shall be upon every beast of the earth, and upon every fowl of the air, and upon all the fishes of the sea; into your hand are they delivered. Every moving thing that liveth shall be meat for you; even as the green herb have I given you all things." And beside this, we must remember, that the holiest and most merciful Being that ever walked this earth, is again and again brought before us, in the Gospels, as commanding his disciples to catch and draw fishes out of the water for the purposes of food. And between the chase and the capture of a fish and of a whale, there is, in reality, no moral difference. They

differ chiefly in the terrible and perilous character of the chase of the whale; and *that* is, in fact, the reason why, to bold and adventurous men, the pursuit of the giant of the deep has its peculiar attractions.'

'But surely,' said Philip, 'the death of the whale must be a frightful scene, and one cannot help pitying the poor creature, and feeling angry with his persecutors.'

'Pity him you may,' said Mr. Melville, 'but indulge that feeling reasonably. There is a striking passage in one of Dr. Paley's works, which should never be forgotten. Writing on the proofs of God's goodness, he says,—

"The air, the earth, the waters, teem with delighted existence. In a Spring-noon, or a Summer evening, on whichever side I turn my eyes, myriads of happy beings crowd upon my view. Swarms of new-born insects are trying their pinions in the air. Their sportive motions, their wanton mazes, their gratuitous activity, their continual change of place without use or purpose, testify their joy, and the exultation which they feel in their lately-discovered faculties. A bee among the flowers in Spring is one of the most cheerful objects that can be looked upon. Its life appears to be all enjoyment; so busy, and yet so pleased; yet it is only a specimen of insect life, with which we happen to be better acquainted than we are with others. And, if we look to what the waters produce, shoals of the fry of fish frequent the margins of rivers, of lakes, and of the sea itself. These are so happy that they know not what to do with themselves. Their attitudes, their vi-

vacity, their leaps, their frolics, all show their excess of spirits, and are simply the effects of that excess. Suppose, then, each individual of this number to be in a state of positive enjoyment, what a sum, collectively, of gratification and pleasure have we here before our view!"

'So reasons Dr. Paley, in spite of the fact that all these creatures have to die; and many of them by the beak of a bird, or by the hook of an angler.

'Now apply these views to the whale's case. He is a creature that enjoys life much. Your whale describes his various pleasures, which went on for several years. All people, who have watched the whale in his daily life, deem him to be one who

is merry and grows fat. And after years of this sort of existence, comes an hour or two of terror, of pain, and of death, and then all is over. Can we think that this hour of suffering outweighs all the enjoyments of past years? Or can we be sure that the whale himself would be the gainer, if left to grow old, and blind, and feeble, and to die a lingering death of mere old age?'

Philip asked, whether this view of the case might not be applied to old and decrepid people, or suffering people, among mankind.

His father answered that the one great difference between man and the brutes lay in the existence of a

soul,—an immortal part,—in man, which did not exist in the brute creation. Death is the end of the bird, the fish, or the quadruped. His history is told in a few words;—a life, perhaps of a few months, perhaps of a few years, in which, as Dr. Paley says, we can see that the creature takes great enjoyment. Then comes death, perhaps in a moment, or in an hour, and all is over. No one can say of such a being, what was said of Judas, 'It had been good for him if he had never been born.' The blackness of despair in Judas's case, arose from the prospect of an hereafter. And this applies, more or less, to every human being. And

hence, if we see a horse or a dog suffering agony from a fatal disease, we kill him at once; because we know that so his pain and sufferings are ended. But we dare not do so with a human being, because there is an hereafter for such an one, and the present and future are connected together, so that we cannot estimate the consequence of our suddenly terminating life.

'But let us turn,' said Mr. Melville, 'from these solemn questions to others which lie nearer at hand. Did you remark the difference which your friend the Whale described between the three great families of his kind? There are the Greenland whales, and

it was a justifiable thing to persecute and to kill the poor whales, who seemed to be about as inoffensive creatures as could anywhere be found?

His father remarked, in answer to this, that, although it was a bad kind of argument to justify one questionable action by citing another, still, it was quite clear that the pursuit of a whale was equally justifiable with the pursuit of many other creatures, whom we constantly hunt and kill in order to get their flesh for food, or their skins for clothing.

'The principal justification,' he went on to say, 'for all these things is found in the command and the power given to Noah. "The fear of

you and the dread of you shall be upon every beast of the earth, and upon every fowl of the air, and upon all the fishes of the sea; into your hand are they delivered. Every moving thing that liveth shall be meat for you; even as the green herb have I given you all things." And beside this, we must remember, that the holiest and most merciful Being that ever walked this earth, is again and again brought before us, in the Gospels, as commanding his disciples to catch and draw fishes out of the water for the purposes of food. And between the chase and the capture of a fish and of a whale, there is, in reality, no moral difference. They

whales, are generally the victims of men who make a prey of them. They are too little awake to escape, and too frightened to resist. A constant man-fishery, as well as whale-fishery, is going on in this world; and far more numerous are the men who are "cut up," than are the whales.

'But there are Rorquals also among the human race. The great Fin-back whale is not a quarrelsome or destructive animal. If you let him alone, he will let you alone. But he is watchful, vigorous, and energetic. If attempts are made upon him, he shakes them off, and flies from the spot. He never grows fat, like the other

sort of whales, but then he never is harpooned and killed as they are. And so is it with many men. They are active, watchful, and prudent; and designing and evil men, when they have tried to ensnare them, and have failed, generally agree to let them alone. Now I would prefer to see you resemble the Rorqual, rather than the Greenlander or the Sperm-whale. Do not allow yourself to think, that life consists in eating, drinking, and making merry. Those who do so, too often end by falling a prey to those who hunt them. Try not to be likened to this kind of whale.'

Philip here remarked, that the

Rorqual whales reminded him of the Normans, who, with some fifty thousand men, conquered this whole kingdom with its millions; and who used to express their scorn of the Saxons, and their eating and drinking propensities, by terming them, 'Those Saxon swine!'

Mr. Melville said, that it was a case in point, and the contrast had been well brought into view in the story of 'Ivanhoe;' where we see the Norman knight, Richard Cœur de Lion, contrasted with the Saxon Athelstane. He then added, 'There is one more feature of the whale's life and the whale's dangers, which may serve for a caution to you. The

Sperm-whale, or the Greenland whale, might generally save their lives, if one lesson could be taught them;—a lesson which the Rorqual knows perfectly. They allow their enemies, and those who seek their lives, to come among them, to mix with them, and to choose opportunities for giving them deadly wounds. The Rorqual knows better. So soon as he finds himself in dangerous company, he is off like the wind. If he could teach his cousins the same watchfulness, there never would be another whale caught.

'And so is it among mankind. There are dangerous companions, among all classes, and of all ages.

And the safest course, in all such cases, is, as soon as their character is ascertained, to get as far from them as possible. This it is that gives safety to the Rorqual, while a neglect of it brings death to hundreds of the others of the whale family. And among mankind the same rule holds good. There are men, and there are boys too, whose companionship can bring nothing but danger. Do not, like the poor Sperm-whales, linger in their company. Rather imitate their wiser cousins, the Rorquals, who no sooner perceive the character of their dangerous companions, than they very quickly get out of their neighbourhood.

'But,—returning to the question of the lawfulness, or the cruelty, of our "whale-fishery,"—let us remark, as our last thought, that this great trade or pursuit seems likely soon to come to an end. It has existed only during the last two or three centuries, and has been carried on chiefly by the English, and by their colonists and descendants in America. But among the many wonderful changes and discoveries of our own day, that of oil-wells, or Petroleum or rock-oil, is not the least. Within the last seven years there have been found, in several countries of the world, wells or openings in the earth, out of which oil can be drawn by pumping. This,

evidently, must be a cheaper and easier way of obtaining the necessary commodity, than by fitting out ships to cruise for one or two years in order to catch, at great risk and frequent loss, the whales of the Northern or Southern Oceans. These oil-wells, which are increasing in number every day, are now supplying us with enormous quantities of oil, which, for many purposes, rivals and takes the place of the whale-oil. One natural result is evident, that there will be, constantly, less and less inducement to fit out whale-fishing expeditions. The pursuit, or persecution, of the poor whales must slacken, if it be not wholly given up. And this is only one

among many signs which seem to betoken that we are approaching a state of things,—a condition of the human family,—very different from any which has yet been seen on this earth. The rapidity and facility of travelling in our day, and the wonderful power of transmitting messages to all parts of the earth by electricity, are more important changes; but the discovery and extensive use of petroleum is by no means an insignificant matter. Taken together, these changes and discoveries seem, as I said, to betoken the approach of a very different state of things from any that men have yet seen.

'But there is one other question

which has occurred to me in the course of your story, and that is — How far have you limited yourself to truth? Is there not any romance, any invention, in the chief facts of the Whale's story?

Philip said that he believed that no part of it, except the framework, was the product of his own imagination. All the main facts of the story, he thought, had been recorded in the most popular narratives of those who had taken part in the whale fishery. Thus it was the *Tuscan*, whaler, of which it is told that,—

"While cruising in the North Pacific, Captain Stavers noticed a small party of Sperm-whales. He and the second mate

lowered their boats and went in pursuit, leaving the chief mate, Mr. Young, on board. While attacking a large whale, the second mate's boat was so shattered, that the captain was obliged to go to its assistance. Mr. Young, on observing their trouble, lowered his boat and came to their assistance. The harpooned whale was then spouting blood and much exhausted; while another of large size remained near, striking at the boats with his flukes, with the evident intention of assisting his wounded comrade. The boats were close together, when the tail of the loose whale passed like lightning over the mate's boat, and Mr. Young, though a large and strong man, was seen flying through the air at a considerable height, and to the distance of nearly forty yards from the boat, where he fell into the water and sank and was seen no more." *

* Bennett's *Whaling Voyage*, vol. ii. p. 216.

Of another whale, Mr. Beale tells us that—

"The whale after receiving the last lance, immediately descended below the surface, and in a few minutes again rose to the surface with great velocity; and striking the boat with his head, threw it high into the air with the men and everything in it, breaking it to pieces, and scattering the crew in all directions. After they had remained in the water, clinging to pieces of the wreck for more than half an hour, one of the other boats arrived and took them in.

"Captain Swain, with twelve men in one boat, then made another attack on the whale with the lance, causing it to throw up blood in large quantities. On the arrival of the third boat, the whale went into its 'flurry' and died; but, to the disappointment of the crews it sunk, and never rose again."*

* Beale's *Sperm Whale*, p. 176.

Another story is thus told —

"On Monday, March 8th, while in company with the *Mohawk*, whales were seen, and down went eight boats in hot pursuit. The waist-boat from our ship was the first to get 'fast,' and no sooner had it done so than the whale knocked the boat into quite a number of pieces, and spilled the men out, leaving them 'lying about loose.' The larboard boat took the line and held on to the whale; while one of the other boats picked up the men. The larboard boat was now flying through the water, which formed a high bank of surf on each side. But the boat soon lost sight of the ship, and was obliged to cut the line and return."*

Another incident is thus narrated by Mr. Beale —

"The whale, on receiving the blow of

* *Life in the South Pacific*, p. 219.

the harpoon, appeared quite terror-struck for a few seconds, and then suddenly recovering itself, darted off like the wind, spinning the boat so quickly round that she was within a shade of being upset. Away the whale went, at the rate of twelve or fifteen miles an hour, right against a head sea, which flew over the bows of the boat, making a high bank of surf on each side. The second boat observed the course, and managed to waylay them, so that a rope was thrown, and both boats, fastened together, were towed at this vast rate. In a very short time they all disappeared together, and it was now within half an hour of sunset."*

And the destruction of the *Essex* is thus described —

"The whale ship *Essex* was destroyed in the South Pacific by a large Sperm whale.

* Beale's *Sperm Whale*, pp. 168, 169.

The crew saw an immense whale come up close to the ship; first appearing to go down, when he struck some part of the keel. He then rose a short distance from the ship, and came with great fury towards it, striking it in the bows with his head, and staving it in. The ship immediately filled, and fell over on her side, and the sailors had to take to their boats, being distant from the nearest land several hundred miles." *

In short, I think that the whale whose story is here told, has invented nothing, and exaggerated nothing. In fact, I have no doubt that any whaling-seaman of a few years' experience, could tell a much more startling and wonderful story.

'That is probable enough,' said

* Beale's *Sperm Whale*, p. 184.

Mr. Melville; 'for certainly there are few more striking exhibitions of the enterprise and audacity of man, than these expeditions of so small and feeble a being, to seek out, engage in strife, and in most cases conquer this mighty creature, who "upon earth has not his like,"—who is "a king over all the children of pride."'

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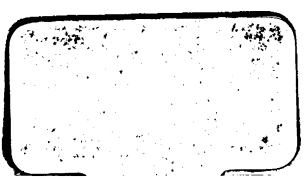
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